



MC.DEL/56/06
5 December 2006

ENGLISH
Original: GERMAN

GOVERNMENT OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

**OSCE
14th Ministerial Council**

**4-5 December 2006
Brussels**

Liechtenstein Delegation

Address

**H.E. Mrs. Rita Kieber-Beck
Minister of Foreign Affairs**

5 December 2006

courtesy translation
check against delivery

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for me to have come to Brussels to participate in the OSCE Ministerial Council this year, to a city that is best known to the European citizens as the embodiment of the peace and stability project in our times. I thank the Belgian Government and the Belgian citizens for the warm welcome and the outstanding organisation of our 14th Ministerial Council.

Dear Colleagues,

It doesn't happen so often that our OSCE circle of participating States receives a new member. Herewith, I would like to particularly welcome the delegation of Montenegro and to wish them all the best for their future work.

I believe that by looking at the current developments in the OSCE region, we shouldn't miss the fact that the successful trip by Pope Benedikt XVI sets a new example for us all and our efforts in the OSCE that old tensions can be overcome.

Moreover, 2006 was marked by a rich and diverse working agenda that we had agreed to in Ljubljana one year ago. The agenda encompassed work on reforming the OSCE, the continuation of our efforts in the area of tolerance and non-discrimination as well as questions of transport, energy supply, migration and the fight against organized crime. In the context of a workshop, organized by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODHIR) in Liechtenstein, the dilemma between the fight against terrorism and the adherence to human rights standards came to the fore and was discussed.

Let me make a few remarks about our work: We have made good progress on a number of current issues. Reform of the OSCE was one of them. We believe that we have managed to strengthen the organisation. From our point of view, it is no longer necessary to put a

particular emphasis on the issue of reform. It is of course understood that we are open to any sensible adjustments.

However, we need to admit that we have paid quite a bit of attention to a range of issues that are not part of the core tasks of the OSCE. Some of these are being dealt within other international organizations and institutions. We are concerned that by adding ever new issues to the OSCE agenda, the OSCE is dissipating its energies and, in the long-term, will lose interest and relevance as an organization that can guide and manage stability and security.

Mr. Chairman,

Liechtenstein measures the competence of the OSCE against its ability to contribute to security and stability on our continent. As part of that, we include the solution or prevention of conflicts as well as showing leadership in furthering open dialogue between participating States, including partner States.

We thank the Belgian Chairmanship and Foreign Minister Karel de Gucht for their leadership in the frozen conflict zones of the OSCE. The Belgian Chairmanship has, with great energy and diplomatic skills, put exemplary efforts into offering solutions to these conflicts through the OSCE. It needs to be stressed that the concerned parties in particular can pick up on proposed solutions and implement them accordingly.

To the aforementioned ability of the OSCE to generate security and stability on the European continent, the implementation of OSCE Human Dimension commitments by all participating States is of central importance. These commitments have contributed essentially to the spread of freedom within the OSCE region in the last 15 years.

The OSCE-Bureau for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has delivered a comprehensive report with a clear message to this Council. The report makes it plain that the participating States are not fully implementing their Human Dimension commitments in a number of areas. Among these I count such fundamental human rights as freedom of religion, the freedom of the media, the freedom of assembly, the prohibition of torture or the right for free and fair elections. We want to thank Ambassador Strohal for pin pointing at these sore points of implementation as well as for making constructive proposals. I believe that based on

this assessment, the participating States should make a strong and unequivocal recommitment to our common values and obligations.

Mr. Chairman,

This year, Liechtenstein is celebrating its 200 year anniversary of its sovereignty. It is a year of mutual reflection, joy and thankfulness. The conclusions we draw from our positive development in our country seem to match the values and aims of the OSCE. Firstly, our state security is based on good neighbourly relations with Switzerland and Austria as well as on our reliance on the good functioning of international law. Secondly, our political security is based on an evolved and firmly established rule of law as well as a strong tradition of a direct democracy in which the Liechtenstein population lively participates. Thirdly, our economic development is based on a liberal market economy and the opportunity that globalisation presents. However, it needs to be added that Liechtenstein as well faces new challenges, like for example the integration of foreigners from different parts of the world.

Mr. Chairman,

Taking charge of the OSCE-chairmanship is a great challenge for any participating State. Chairing the organization is principally open to any state. We are thankful to those states that declare themselves ready to take charge of this responsible task. We welcome in particular that the candidatures proposed reflect the geographical diversity of the OSCE region. We look at the chairmanship as a service to our organization, its mandates and our values in particular.

We wish your country (Spain), Mr. Chairman, much success in the coming year. Liechtenstein will support you in your plans, especially in your priority to fight international terrorism.

I thank you for your attention.